

ACT 55 Changes to Course Options

The Wisconsin 2015-17 State Budget Bill, ACT 55, made changes to the Course Options statute (s. 118.52 Wis. Stats.). These changes took effect upon passage of the bill and are in effect for the 2015-16 school year. Specifically, language was added to allow institutions of higher education (IHE) to charge additional tuition and fees to students (or parents or guardians) for courses at an IHE for which students can earn postsecondary credit. There were no changes, however, to the course options statute that affect courses taken through the program in another public school district, at a charter school, or at a DPI approved nonprofit organization.

The impacts of the new statutory language on course options are:

1. The “Tuition Amount” contained in the course options cost table used during the 2014-15 school year will continue to be in effect for the purpose of calculating costs to be charged to the resident school district for course options courses.
2. For courses in which the district is responsible for delivery of the course (instruction, facilities, materials, etc.), the amount to be paid by the resident school district to the IHE must still be negotiated between the district and the IHE, with the expectation that the agreement will be cost neutral for both parties. Examples of these courses are College Credit in High School, Concurrent Enrollment, CAPP, PIE and Transcribed Credit.
3. For courses offered to high school students only and for which both high school and college credits are offered, but for which the IHE is responsible for delivery of the course (instruction, facilities, materials, etc.), the amount to be paid by the resident school district to the IHE must be negotiated between the district and the IHE. An example of this type of course would be a course taught by a technical college instructor through a sec.38.14 Wis. Stats. agreement.
4. For courses offered to all eligible students of an IHE and for which the IHE is responsible for delivery of the course (instruction, facilities, materials, etc.), the amount to be paid by the resident school district to the IHE will be 50% of the tuition the IHE charges for the course, not to exceed 50% of the UW-Madison tuition for a course with the same number of credits, plus any fees and/or books.
5. For any courses for which students would earn college credits for successful completion at the IHE, the district may negotiate additional tuition and fees to be charged by the IHE to students who enroll in the course at the IHE. This is in addition to any amount paid by the school district to the IHE as noted in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4 above.
6. Only an educational institution that is an institution of higher education may charge a pupil, or the parent or guardian of a minor pupil, additional tuition and fees for attending a course at the IHE for postsecondary credit.

There were also several changes made in the budget in relation to new authority for a school district to enter into whole grade sharing agreements. The whole grade sharing changes related to the course options statute will only affect students enrolled in districts that are participating in a whole grade sharing agreement.

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